644 fields. On that day, the Mogho Naba had one or two cows
651 slaughtered and a large quantity of sagbo (millet cakes) prepared
241 for the workers. If the latter, after being assembled two or three times in the manner indicated above, were not finished with all the fields, the work was carried on by the samand'kamba (the people who dwelt in the outer courtyard of the Mogho Naba).

644 The emperor, however, received none of the millet grown in
574 his own fields, which, incidentally, did not have their present boundaries. This millet was reserved exclusively [74] for use as food for foreign visitors and for the feeding of horses (1).

1. For the ceremony of threshing this millet (kawinré), see the special chapter below [Chapter 16].

644 It was the duty of the canton chiefs and the ministers to pro-
651 vide loads of millet for the use of the Mogho Naba and his harem ("harem" should be understood to mean all young or middle-aged women, but to exclude the elderly women who have to support themselves and who have their private fields).

644 (b) Repair of the houses of the Mogho Naba. The work of
651 building and repairing the houses actually belonging to the em-
356 peror fell entirely upon the inhabitants of Bilbalogo (section of the Baloum Naba), Kamsaonghin (section of the chief eunuch), and Dapoya (section of the slaves of the Mogho Naba).

[343] The outbuildings, wédanga, four round huts with thatched roofs located outside the emperor's house, served as stables for the horses given to the Mogho Naba by canton chiefs or other personages and were built and maintained by three ministers, the Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, and Gounga Naba, with the help of the people in their sections.

The tamping of the floors and clay roofs was done wholly by the wives of the persons responsible for [75] the construction or repair, that is, the wives of the ministers and of the inhabitants of their sections.

651 Labor service due the province chiefs, ministers of the emperor.
645 (a) Cultivation of fields. The fields belonging to the ministers
241 of the Mogho Naba were cultivated by a system of payments in kind as follows.

651 For the Baloum Naba, the work was done by all the bilbalsé.
645 The Kam Naba set the day for the sekka (gathering), and all the
241 young and able-bodied men were required to report. They received the food they required from the Baloum Naba. The number of work days was not fixed. The sekka might be held once or several times, depending on the acreage.

For the other ministers, the Ouidi Naba, Gounga Naba, and Larrhallé Naba, the field work was done by the people in their entourage (that is, the inhabitants of their respective sections) and in the neighboring villages which were formerly under their jurisdiction. Since the formation of the canton of Ouagadougou and its outskirts, the area has been under the exclusive authority of the Baloum Naba (fourth minister of the emperor).

645 If, however, the fields were so extensive that their cultiva-
476 tion could not be taken care of solely by the above system -- the
241 laborers also had to care for their own fields -- the ministers [76] called for volunteers from among the young men in the neighboring villages and paid them with food and drink. This is the sissoaga, a system commonly in use among the Mossi.

645 (b) Construction and repair of houses. As a general rule, re-
651 pair of the roofs of huts in the establishments of the province chiefs
356 was the duty of the inhabitants of their respective sections and of the neighboring villages under their jurisdiction.

651 The canton chiefs. The cultivation of the fields of the naba
634 and the repair of the huts in their establishments were wholly in-
241 cumbent on their subjects. Each village had a fixed number of
356 huts to be repaired or roofed; this is known as sough pilli, and it is still in effect annually.

651 Today, perhaps in the interests of tranquillity, canton chiefs require labor service in their fields only from their sogoné and samand'kamba and sometimes even resort to the sissoaga.

The local administration, with respect for local customs, has the policy of organizing the system in a way that, in our opinion, will safeguard the interests of the natives, overburdened due to the negligence of the province chiefs, and at the same time will enhance the prestige of the Mossi chiefs.

653 The naba is not entitled to any other labor services. The building of dams to provide water for the villages cannot be

343 Chicken house and pens. Every head of a compound has a
235 small straw hut for fowl within his establishment. There is also a
231 small round hut of clay for the sheep and goats.

Repair of houses. When an establishment is damaged by rain
● 356 or is in need of repair, the work is done by the residents (the head of the family and the dakompa, as well as the father's wives and brothers) with no help from outsiders. There is no pay beyond the usual meals. The head of the family merely says to the workers when the work has been completed: "N'fa nel toumtogo, imaou nian (thanks for the hard work, many thanks for the labor)."

[223] Chapter 14

Mossi Clothing

Dress of the Naba

241 In this chapter we shall examine the various modifications
554 and improvements in the dress of Mossi chiefs.
435

1. Before and during the first twenty years of the French occupation. (a) Zangoego pelga: a large robe made of narrow bands of cotton fabric, rather expertly woven. These robes, which are made and embroidered by specialists, used to cost from 70,000 to 100,000 cowries (1).

1. One hundred francs. The five-franc note is now worth 1,000 cowries. The silver five-franc piece was worth from 5,000 to 7,000 cowries, depending on the fluctuations of exchange.

(b) Karfo: a large robe, dark blue in color, made of the same material as the preceding (50,000 to 70,000 cowries).

(c) Noufa: a large robe and trousers, made of very fine fabric in a dark gray color. It had the value of two slaves or 70,000 cowries for the robe and 50,000 for the trousers.

241 tuber, Coleus coffini, which Europeans call oussounifing or fabirama,
262 and which may replace potatoes in a pinch, are cultivated in the soils most propitious to them.

221 The precious karite /shea/ tree (Butyrospermum parkii) grows in
262 most fields; its fruit, prized for its cool and slightly sweet flesh, con-
137 tains a pit which yields karite butter, the fat most widely used in
[388] cooking and to make soap. Around the villages, and sometimes even within them, the néré /locust bean/ tree (Parkia africana) produces
[356] elongated pods; its bark, mashed in water, yields a paste that is used to harden the floors of the huts. Its flour makes a cooling drink when
[272] mixed in water, and it may also be eaten; its seeds /8/ are used to make kalro /kalre in the original/, the soumbara of the Bambara, an ingredient /made from locust beans, néré/ of all carefully prepared
137 sauces. The doubalé and silk-cotton or kapokiero trees spread their shade over the weavers, numerous among the Mossi, and over the talkers who are even more. Bamboo grows well in the damp southern regions, and the palm oil tree is occasionally found. The caoutchouc liana, however, has not yet been introduced.

231 Small chickens run in all directions through the villages, along with domesticated guinea hens. Everywhere in the bush near the huts,
[857] little boys herd goats and sheep; this is the task of youngsters here at the age when their contemporaries among us /in France/ begin to learn the alphabet. The most common sheep and goats are small in size. The sheep have short hair. Sometimes, especially in the larger
[439] villages where markets are held, goats and sheep are to be seen with long legs and long, curled horns. They are imported from the north-east and fattened to be sold as butcher's meat. The height of fashion for the wife or a prosperous naba is to be followed by a Touareg /Tuareg/ sheep, well washed and very white. It is fed on millet leftovers and bean mush, and its mistress often presents it with a bit of salt to lick. In short, it is well cared for and agreeably fat; on some important feast day, it will embellish the menu.

The huts are usually guarded by very commonplace dogs, often
[224] ill-tempered, but cowardly. A stick is enough to drive them away. They are mostly used in the hunt, the great Mossi pastime during the dry season. Domesticated ducks are sometimes found in nabas' households, as well as pigeons, but these birds are not widespread and not within the reach of everyone. Finally, almost every group of huts has cats which belong to the women and which are difficult

221 the men bring bunches of peanuts. While nibbling on the green nuts
241 and talking, they all separate the pods from the leaves. The latter
are carefully set aside along with the bean leaves. They make ex-
[23] cellent fodder for the horses during the dry season, when the sun has
burned off all the grass in the bush.

221 By November harvesting is completed. The sun has already dried
241 out the grass, and the time has come to cut straw for séko and roofing.
356 /48/ This task is usually reserved for children and servants (dakonré).
857 The head of the household tells each one of them the number of straw
bundles he is to cut, and every morning the children set off in groups,
a sickle on their shoulders. They look for straw on the banks of the
watercourses and return when the sun begins to scorch. This marks
the end of the working day, and there is nothing to do now but rest.
The dry season is indeed a time of rest, and from November to May
there are no pressing tasks.

[805] It gets cold in December. This is winter (sapolro). The natives
221 gather at dawn around fires of millet stalks, twigs, or straw; anything
241 combustible serves. Every newcomer must contribute an armful; it
[372] is the price of admission to a seat near the fire. At the end of December
476 all the straw for roofing has been stored, and then the small millet
is threshed. Every inhabitant of the village has the use of the thresh-
ing floor in turn. He notifies his friends and acquaintances as he did
when he weeded his field. The millet beer is ready, and on the pre-
vious day the women have covered the area with cow dung diluted in
water to harden the floor. At dawn the friends arrive, and the millet
is removed from the granary and spread out on the floor. This is done
with the help of millet stalks tied together in bundles and dragged
along the ground with ropes while a man bears down upon them.
The flail is merely a stick cut in the bush, a tree branch shaped in
such a way that the part which is held in the hand is rather thin and
flexible, while the part which is used for threshing is quite thick and
forms an obtuse angle with the part in the hand. The boys line up in
a row, with the tots at either end; the drummers stand before or behind
them; and the flails fall with the beat, crushing the ears of millet
and separating the very dry grain from the stalks. All the while the
old men sit in the shade of the granaries, talking, smoking, and
sewing clothes. When the threshers get to the end of the floor, they
retrace their steps and rest, while the old men gather with straw brooms
the grain which has been scattered outside the pile.

226 the sacrifices, these amphibians have no scruples about biting a foot or leg. However, the crocodiles in these ponds are seldom large enough to sever a limb.

In those places where the water is somewhat shallow and flows for some period of time, the bank dwellers make dams of tree branches intertwined with millet stalks. These are placed diagonally to the current and lead to a sort of funnel closed with a net. The fish follow the dam, enter the funnel, and get caught in the meshes of the net.

221 The major ceremonies also take place at this time of year.[1] This
356 is when the Day of the Dead is celebrated, when the koure is held. When the first gust of wind unroofs a few huts or at least indicates those that need a new covering, everyone sets down to the task. The thatch cut in December is used for the purpose. Before the soukala,
[283 children and youths knot blades of straw with strings of hemp and
857] plait séko. They also go into the bush to cut down branches and to gather bark which serves to bind the branches together. When everything is ready, the head of the household calls his people and gathers a few neighbors. The roof is made and laid within a short morning. This task must be repeated every two years or so, and it is men's work entirely. At the beginning of winter, the villages take on a smart
221 new look. This is when people think of building a new hut, the man who has acquired a new wife, the child who has grown into a young man and who can no longer live with his mother, the man whose wealth has increased by a few head of cattle or a horse. The women fetch water, the children knead the mortar with their feet and carry to the mason the mud clods prepared by the old men. These tasks are not laborious, and they are accomplished with merrymaking.

Now the thorn bushes have grown back, the rains will soon fall again, and already a few gusts of wind herald the coming winter. The Pleiades have appeared on the horizon, and the baobabs are budding once more. It is necessary to take up the hoe again and to sow; this is a good thing, because the millet is running low in the granaries. The working cycle we have described must begin anew. And year follows year without bringing any major changes in the life of the common man.

[1] [i.e., February-April. -Analyst]

252 boiling water and eaten in this fashion. This is an important source
261 of food in times of famine which, when they come among the Blacks, usually come in May, June, and the first half of July. The néré gathered in March and April comes just in time to combat the famine.

/498/ As for the seeds of the fruit, they are removed and set
252 aside before the sweet meal is mashed. They are preserved to make
263 kologo (the Mossi name) or soumbara (the Mandé name), a pungent condiment highly prized by the Blacks. In order to make this, the women boil the seeds, allow them to cool, stamp on them to remove the skin, and wash them carefully at the watercourse. Sometimes the skin is removed by hand. Then they are cooked for 24 hours, and steeped in water for another 48 in a well-covered canari, in the shade, in a damp spot, to rot the seeds. Then they are laid to dry in the sun on a mat for two days, and pressed with the hands into balls of varying size. It is in this shape that the
[435] soumbara is utilized or sold. In Mossi territory, small balls are worth 100 cowries apiece and large ones 300. At Leo, in Nounouma territory, all balls are the same size and worth 100 cowries. In appearance, the kologo is rather similar to that black coloring matter used by French housewives to add substance to the broth. Whenever a woman wants to use some kologo, to add some to the sauce, she pries loose a small piece from the ball with the tip of a knife and mashes it with the crushing stone. She pours the resulting powder into the sauce.

● 356 Let us note further that the bark of the néré pod is also used, although not for eating purposes. The Mossi and Gourounsi use it to blacken and polish the floor of their huts and clay roofs. The néré bark is seeped in water for one day, and then the water is tossed on the surface to be polished, that has been tamped down carefully first. The floor is tamped again with the water, and then allowed to dry. This is done three or four times, and in the end the clay surface acquires a handsome black or grey polish. It almost becomes a mirror if the procedure is carried out properly.

Finally, to close our list of the uses to which néré is put, we
284 have seen that the brown filaments that grow on the bark of the
291 néré pod are used among the Gourounsi to make belts for /499/ the women, or rather cords to hold up the bunches of leaves that constitute the sole garment of local ladies.

462 Beside cooking tasks, Mossi women have cleaning tasks. They
356 sweep the huts and soukala with handfuls of straw, small primitive brooms 30 or 40 centimeters long. They wash and bleach clothes and make soap. Finally, it is the women who spin cotton and tamp the floor of the huts.

356 This tamping is done as follows. "The natives spread on the surface to be tamped a layer, 10 centimeters thick, of a special black earth that consists chiefly /561/ of ashes and humus resulting from the decomposition of plants and household refuse.

"Above this, the Mossi spread a second layer consisting of clayey ferruginous gravel, from 3 to 5 centimeters thick. The small pebbles are subsequently reduced by heavy tamping to very fine material. Then, the natives spread a little water over this material and tamp again. Once this is done, they allow the floor to dry.

"This procedure is repeated several times, but ordinary water is replaced with néré water (the latter resulting from the infusion in hot water of the fragments of néré fruit, dondo in Mossi) or water into which cow dung has been mixed. When the last tamping and the last drying have been completed, the natives pour néré water in large quantities onto the new floor.

"Finally, the last procedure consists of polishing the surface with flat stones." (Cahier des rapports of the Ouagadougou circle).

593 The duties of Mossi women toward their husband are as follows:
833 1. The fulfillment of the conjugal duty.
562 "The wife," says Moulins, "must never shirk her conjugal duty except when she is pregnant or nursing.

"Should a woman evade her husband from newlywed shyness or for any other reason, he would use at first all means of persuasion within his command, and especially beg the wife's relatives to have a word with her. Should their exhortations prove vain, coercion would be used by beating the woman or putting her in irons. Finally, should those means fail to bring the wife to compliance, she could be turned out by her husband."

593 2. Faithfulness.
562 "The wife must live with her husband. If she abandons the conjugal domicile, her spouse has the absolute right to force her to return. /562/ If she takes refuge with her relatives, the latter must

462 Women's tasks.—First of all, Mossi women help with the cultivation of the soil. They do not clear land for tillage, but during the winter season they do all the other agricultural tasks in competition with the men. Since they must also pound the grain, cook, and do other household tasks, however, they cannot work in the fields as long as the men. When there are several wives, they share the labor. Some devote themselves to housework while others work in the fields. When there are not enough of them to permit such a division of labor, they allow the men to leave in the morning and do not join them with the food until about 10 or 11 o'clock. After the meal and the noonday rest, they work with the men, but they leave the fields earlier to prepare the evening meal. Before returning to the village, however, the women work on their little individual plots, but only for a short time, while the men, after leaving the communal fields, linger in their own small fields until nightfall.

[252] Besides working in the fields, the women do household chores. They pound the grain in mortars and crush it on the crushing stones. We shall speak again about these mortars, pestles, and stones under "The Mode of Subsistence" /not translated/.

They do the cooking and prepare the various Mossi dishes which we shall describe later /not translated/. They go to get wood in the bush and water at the wells. /244/

Let us add that it is the women who pick the karite /shea/ nuts during the rainy season and the pods of the néré /locust bean/ in the spring (end of March, April). They, too, prepare the karite butter and the néré flour. They also brew dolo and, if need be, the various other drinks of which we have already spoken in the section on crops' /not translated/ and to which we shall return under "The Mode of Subsistence" /not translated/.

[256 412] In addition to their cooking tasks, the Mossi women of Yatenga must perform cleaning chores. They sweep the huts and the whole establishment with bunches of straw tied in the middle with a rope. This makes a small primitive broom without a handle, 30 or 40 centimeters long. They launder the clothes and make soap. They spin the cotton, whereas the men weave it. Finally, it is they who tamp the earthen floors and walls of the huts with wooden clappers (in Mossi, silimpandé in the singular, silimpama in the plural) after adding néré water. We shall see later in "Mode of Subsistence (construction of the compound)" how this is done.

464 salary consists either of 100 cowries (10 centimes) or a basket of unthreshed millet. In addition to this, the employer feeds the employee. This is limited, I repeat, to times of famine.

/264/ True clientage, such as we described among the Malinké, does not occur among the Mossi.

2. Domestic servants. The domestic servant, such as exists in 356 France and other civilized societes, does not and never did exist among the Mossi. Actually, domestic tasks (cleaning, cooking, and washing) are performed by the women in Yatenga society. For a corroboration of this, we refer the reader to what we said above about women's tasks.

567 3. Slaves. Origins. The Mossi owned slaves prior to the French occupation. They still own some nowadays, although far fewer, only those, in fact, who did not run away. Since recruitment dried up at its source through the prohibition bearing on the purchase and sale of slaves, reinforced by severe penalties, the number of captives has dwindled day by day, and it is obvious that eventually they will disappear completely. At present, this has not yet come to pass.

[727] The Mossi used to obtain their slaves through raids on the Samo, Bobo, Kipirsi, Gourounsi, Habbé, and Rimaïbe /slaves of the Peul/. The Yarsé also brought some from the southern markets (Sikasso, Samory states, etc.) and sold them all over Yatenga. They kept many for their own benefit, and they possessed more slaves than the Mossi (as merchants, indeed, they always owned more slaves than the Mossi). The Peul of Yatenga also had many slaves, more than the Mossi, which they obtained through raid or purchase.

Voluntary slavery and debt slavery provided no captives, since these two kinds of slavery never existed in the region.

The Mossi of Yatenga themselves did not constitute a source of slaves for other Mossi of Yatenga. One Mossi of the region could not be the slave of another Mossi. Only members of the alien groups listed above could be enslaved (including the Mossi of Ouagadougou). The Peul were not enslaved, but only held for ransom, since they were both rich (in cattle) and lazy. Their Rimaïbe, however, as we have said, were taken as captives (a Peul would certainly not be willing to pay any ransom for them).

727 When two factions were at war in Yatenga, the Mossi who were made prisoners were killed immediately, including small children of the male sex, even those who were still at their mother's breast.